REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-18 are currently pending. Claims 1, 12, 17, and 18 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 12, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,209,180 to Takagi et al. (hereinafter "the '180 patent"); and Claims 6, 8-11, and 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '180 patent.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to an image processor for processing a video signal, comprising: (1) aspect ratio information acquisition means for acquiring aspect ratio information about an original video signal by detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the original video signal; (2) aspect ratio conversion means for carrying out a process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal based on the acquired aspect ratio information to generate a processed video signal representing an image of the original video signal having a roundness of 1; (3) background signal generation means for generating a background video signal serving as a background of the processed video signal; and (4) video signal combination means for executing a process of combining the processed video signal and the background video signal, both having been subject to aspect ratio conversion, to generate a synthesized video signal. The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.[1]

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

---

[1] See, e.g., page 9, lines 18 and 19 of the specification.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1, the '180 patent is directed to a video output

device that detects an aspect ratio of an input video and adds blanks on both left and right

sides of the video to produce a video having an aspect ratio of 16/9 when the detected aspect

ratio is 4/3, and adds a blank on both the upper and lower sides of the video to produce a

video having an aspect ratio of 4/3, when an aspect ratio of 16/9 for the input video is

detected. Further, the '180 patent also discloses that the device includes a blank video

detecting unit configured to detect whether or not a predetermined range on both left and

right sides of the input video is uniform, and to detect whether or not a predetermined range

on both upper and lower sides of an input video is uniform. Further, the '180 patent discloses

that when blanks are detected in a video image signal, the newly added blanks are determined

to have a color and brightness to be the same as the color and brightness of the blanks already

in the video image.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '180 patent fails to disclose aspect

ratio information acquisition means for <u>acquiring aspect ratio information about an original</u>

<u>video signal by detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the</u>

<u>original video signal</u>, as recited in Claim 1. In this regard, Applicants note that while the

'180 patent discloses an aspect ratio detecting unit 4 in Figure 1 and a step of detecting an

aspect ratio of an input video in step S1 in Figure 2, the '180 patent does not disclose how the

aspect ratio is detected. Applicants respectfully submit that the '180 patent is silent regarding

acquiring an aspect ratio by <u>detecting a video identification signal that has been</u>

<u>superimposed on an original video signal</u>, as required by Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants

respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 patentably defines over the '180 patent.

Independent Claim 12 is directed to an image processing method for processing a

video signal that includes the step of acquiring aspect ratio information about an original

video signal by detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the

original video signal. Independent Claim 17 recites a similar step. As discussed above, the '180 patent fails to disclose detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the original video signal, as recited in Claims 12 and 17. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections for Claims 12 and 17 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims.

Further, Applicants note that Claim 18, which depends from Claim 17, clarifies that the acquired aspect ratio information is a two-bit code. Applicants respectfully submit that the '180 patent is silent regarding this limitation. Further, Applicants note that the outstanding Office Action has failed to address Claim 18.

Regarding the rejection of dependent Claims 6, 8-11, and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the '180 patent, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of those dependent claims are rendered moot by the present amendment to independent Claims 1 and 12.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 12, and 17 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over the '180 patent.
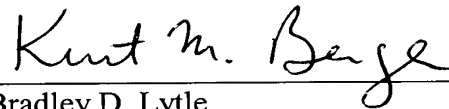
Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the

outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as

amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and

favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413-2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

Bradley D. Lytle
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 40,073

Kurt M. Berger, Ph.D.
Registration No. 51,461

I:\ATTY\KMB\266'S\266229US\266229US-AM2.DOC

11